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TAGS: [NATO PINS PREL MARR MOPS AF NL](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/AFGHANISTAN: DUTCH VIEWS LEADING UP TO
NATO MINISTERIALS

REF: A. STATE 4834
[1](#)B. STATE 7434

Classified By: Ambassador Roland Arnall, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The GONL for the most part agrees with our NATO foreign and defense ministerial goals for Afghanistan. Dutch officials expressed both support and concern regarding the USG-proposed "Comprehensive Approach," and hoped we will continue to balance kinetic and development operations. On increased reconstruction funding, the Dutch agree more should be done through the UN, but the UN should do more in the southern provinces. They also are looking at reconstruction projects along the Pakistan border. On counter-narcotics, the Dutch plan to announce at the foreign ministerial approval of Afghan local government-led eradication efforts in Uruzgan, contingent on a list of conditions. The GONL supports increasing the visibility of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), and have requested to be included in future G-8 Afghanistan-related discussions. On public diplomacy, the Dutch agree more needs to be done by Allies to convince their publics, but also suggested the USG do more to increase European public awareness of USG reconstruction efforts. The GONL will support SACEUR's call to fill Combined Joint Statement of Requirement (CJSOR) shortfalls, but is skeptical of success and limited in its ability to contribute additional forces. They are reviewing an assistance package to bolster the Afghan National Police; however, domestic sentiment limits their ability to provide Afghan National Security Forces with arms or ammunition. Internally, the GONL is reviewing options for possibly extending its deployment in some capacity, and will make a decision on extending by the end of the year. However, much depends on the current situation on-the-ground, as well as on-going coalition formation negotiations. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Ambassador Arnall discussed reftel foreign and defense ministerial goals on Afghanistan with MOD Director for General Policy Affairs Lo Casteleijn on January 19, and with Dutch CHOD Gen. Berlijn on January 19 and 22. MFA Uruzgan Task Force Coordinator Pieter-Jan Kleiweg de Zwaan discussed foreign ministerial goals with polmiloff on January 18 and 23.

Comprehensive Strategy

[1](#)3. (C) Dutch officials at various levels have expressed both support and concern for the USG-proposed "Comprehensive Approach" on Afghanistan. Casteleijn said any "comprehensive approach" should be all-encompassing, to include Afghan security and local government elements. Dutch CHOD Gen. Berlijn echoed these sentiments January 19, suggesting it was important to define what exactly is meant by "comprehensive strategy." He said some might perceive it as meaning more kinetic operations and "dealing the Taliban a final military blow" -- if that is what is meant, Berlijn said, then the Dutch will have problems.

Increased Reconstruction Funding

[1](#)4. (C) Kleiweg said the GONL fully supports working through the GOA and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on reconstruction funding, but is critical of the UN's reluctance to work in the southern provinces. Kleiweg noted that ISAF has a UN mandate, but new UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon neglected to mention Afghanistan as a UN priority. Kleiweg also stressed the importance of assistance from the

EU and international NGOs; EU projects on police and rule of law were steps in the right direction, but much more needs to be done. Kleiweg also said the Dutch would be interested in possibly funding a project related to the GOA's reconciliation Program Takhim-e-Solh (PTS), and were actively looking for a concrete proposal in that regard.

Bolster Commitment to Counter-Narcotics

15. (C) On counter-narcotics, Kleiweg acknowledged that the GONL was re-examining its position on eradication. Previously, the Dutch opposed eradication without providing a viable alternative to poppy farming. Kleiweg said, however, that the "on-the-ground reality" suggests steps need to be taken now on counter-narcotics so that farmers understand

poppy cultivation carries economic risks, and Uruzgan Governor Monib favors eradication efforts.

16. (C) Kleiweg said the GONL plans to announce during the NATO Foreign Ministerial that it is prepared to accept Monib-led eradication efforts, contingent on a list of conditions. For example, eradication should not be carried out near large markets or target small farmers. In addition, the Dutch will push Gov. Monib to carry out balanced, "tribally neutral" eradication efforts to avoid the perception that one tribe in particular was being punished. Kleiweg added that additional "cash for work" projects would be initiated in eradicated areas to provide a short-term economic alternative. Longer term, Kleiweg said the Dutch will continue to look at alternatives and possibly subsidies, although he expressed concern subsidies might send the wrong message by rewarding bad behavior.

Support Civilian Cooperation Framework

17. (C) Kleiweg said the Dutch fully support improving existing structures by increasing the visibility of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) with meetings at the Political Director level. Kleiweg noted that the French proposal from the NATO Riga Summit for an Afghanistan "Contact Group" was dead, and that civilian cooperation efforts should be coordinated by the JCMB. He said the Dutch will participate in the JCMB Political Directors meeting in Berlin on January 30, and expressed interest in subsequent G-8 discussions on Afghanistan. Given the level of their involvement in Afghanistan, the Dutch argue they should be included in G-8 Afghanistan deliberations, and have demarched both Berlin and London about the possibility of sitting in, Kleiweg said.

Public Diplomacy Campaign

18. (C) Dutch officials at all levels supported the need for better public diplomacy campaigns regarding Afghanistan. Kleiweg agreed with the need to enhance public diplomacy campaigns at home, and also stated support for better public relations by Karzai, including especially in the southern provinces. Kleiweg noted that a number of GOA officials have roots in Uruzgan, but rarely come to visit -- this does not help instill confidence in the national government at the local level.

19. (C) Gen. Berlijn stressed January 22 the need for the USG to better explain its reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. He noted that despite the fact that the USG leads investment efforts in Afghanistan -- and is spending "a lot of money in Uruzgan" -- the European public still believes the United States values kinetic operations over development. Berlijn acknowledged that the press certainly is part of the problem, as it tends to focus more on military operations and "body counts" -- that sells newspapers. But if the USG could better explain its own reconstruction efforts and present the kinetic/development balance in Afghanistan, Berlijn argued, then perhaps other Allies might be inclined to contribute more toward ISAF.

Shortfalls and Caveats

10. (C) Dutch officials at all levels note that Dutch forces are overstretched in Afghanistan, and are therefore unlikely to contribute additional forces in answer to shortfalls identified by the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR) review. That said, FM Bot will support SACEUR's call for more contributions at the foreign ministerial. Kleiweg was pessimistic on chances of filling CJSOR shortfalls, and said countries like Norway that have expressed some interest in contributing more will face considerable pressure. He was curious "what the USG would be bringing to the table" regarding contributing more forces. The GONL rescinded its national caveats pertaining to operations -- but not detainees -- prior to the Riga Summit.

11. (C) Kleiweg said domestic opposition effectively prevents

the GONL from contributing equipment such as arms and ammunition to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). However, the GONL was currently working on a five million Euro package aimed at bolstering Afghan National Police strongholds at the local level, and consisting of cars and trucks, ambulances, and possibly even basic support like computer equipment for administrative purposes. Kleiweg said the Dutch want to ensure the money and donations are managed carefully, especially given the level of corruption in Afghanistan.

Keeping the Heat on Pakistan

12. (C) Kleiweg noted reftel B reference to increasing Allied awareness and support for efforts with Pakistan to disrupt Taliban and other extremist use of Pakistani territory for cross-border activities. Kleiweg said the Dutch also will highlight this issue at the foreign ministerial, pushing Pakistan to do more in these efforts, especially regarding removing Taliban leadership in Quetta.

Extension Possibilities?

13. (C) Kleiweg said the MFA fully understands NATO's mission in Afghanistan will take longer than two years to be successful, and will likely support an extension of Dutch forces in Afghanistan beyond 2008. The key question, Kleiweg said, will be in what capacity -- either continued in Uruzgan with perhaps another country in the lead, or in another location. He anticipated stiff opposition in Parliament, especially as some parties want to do more in Africa, an operating in both Africa and Afghanistan would be "out of the question." At the very least, Kleiweg said the MFA will push hard to keep the option of extending open as government coalition formation negotiations proceed -- but a decision must be made by the end of the year for logistical reasons.

14. (C) Castelleijn also acknowledged that reconstruction efforts will take longer than the two years to which the Dutch have committed. He suggested that Labor Party (PvdA) leadership be asked the same question publicly; he suspected PvdA agrees the mission requires more time, but has been reluctant to voice that opinion because it may be at odds with their party's rank-and-file. Castelleijn said that if the Dutch deployment is extended, the Dutch will most likely reduce troop numbers and look for another ally in addition to Australia with which to partner, perhaps Norway. He added that the Norwegian FM was impressed with Dutch efforts to balance kinetic and development operations during a recent visit to Uruzgan.

15. (C) Castelleijn also said an extension was possible, but suggested demonstrating short-term success to the Dutch public was vital. A difficult spring offensive leading to an imbalance of kinetic over reconstruction efforts would build cynicism in the Netherlands and contribute to the belief that the Dutch should honor their two-year commitment "to the letter" with no extension. If, however, the Dutch can demonstrate short-term reconstruction successes and rising Afghan confidence in Dutch efforts -- coupled with requisite combat operations -- then chances were good the Dutch Parliament and public could be convinced that the Dutch should stay longer in Afghanistan, Belijn said.

ARNALL